

Self Publishing To-Do List

Phase	Item	Details	Additional Consideration	Time Frame
Prep Work:				
	Brainstorm Ideas	Develop ideas for the story	Mood boards, song playlists, aesthetic photos	
	Plot	Organize your story ideas in preparation for writing	You can try pantsing, the snowflake method, Save the Cat, etc. Experiment and find what method works for you!	1 month
	Set Goals	Develop a publishing plan based on when you wish to publish, and how quickly you can complete the steps of the process.	It will take some experience for you to gauge how much time you need for each step, but add in 1-3 months of extra time for the unexpected.	
Writing Phase:				
	Rough Draft	Write the book. None of the next steps can happen if you don't first have a completed manuscript. It doesn't have to be good, just has to be done.		1-2 months
	Self Edit	Perform self-edits on the rough draft manuscript.	See the Self-Editing Checklist	1 month

Alpha Reader / Critique Partner	The first pair of eyes that will see your book. This reader will give feedback on the overarching plot, and comment on the structure, plot, themes, and any plot holes or inconsistencies.		~3 weeks
Self Edit	After receiving feedback from the Alpha Reader, consider the comments and make changes as necessary. Continue to refine the manuscript.		1 month
Beta Reader / Sensitivity Reader	With a mostly completed manuscript, have multiple Beta Readers read through the manuscript. In general, it is good to have a large pool of Beta Readers so that you can analyze their overarching feedback instead of the specific ones.	<p>Beta readers will give feedback on the story and their reading experience.</p> <p>A Sensitivity Reader will give feedback on specific plot elements that handle the experiences of a group outside of your personal experience (minority groups in particular).</p>	1 month

	Repeat Self-Edit/ Beta Reader	After receiving feedback from your Beta Readers, consider their feedback and look for trends. Adjust your manuscript as necessary. You can repeat the Beta/Sensitivity Reader step as many times as you feel necessary, then move on to the final edits.		1-2 months
	Final Edits	Perform final edits for the manuscript, then... stop!		1-2 months
	Copy Editor	A Copy Editor will take your completed manuscript and look for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. This is the step that makes your manuscript all nice and shiny!		1 month
Publishing Phase				

Phase

Formatter	Format the final manuscript for publication in physical and ebook format. This will take your relatively small page count book and triple it!	For the final copy, you will need to decide what your front and back material will include. Front: Title Page, Copyright Page, Dedication, Table of Contents, Map, etc. Back: Author Bio, Acknowledgements , etc. Can use Pages/ Word for simple formatting, or invest in software like <u>Atticus</u> or <u>Vellum</u> .	1 week
ISBN	While some Print on Demand Publishers (POD) allow you to use their own unique chain codes for your book (AISN for Amazon, for example) if you are planning on producing many books and creating an author platform, it would be advantageous to buy ISBNs to further separate your works from any specific POD. In the U.S., ISBNs can only be purchased through <u>Bowker</u> . They are expensive, but they are a worthwhile purchase.		

Copyright	Submit your final manuscript to the <u>Copyright Office</u> to officially copyright your book. Though your book is covered under copyright as a unique work you produced, officially registering the work will help add a layer of protection.	~\$45	
Cover Designer	One of the most exciting step in the process, the cover! My recommendation, unless you have a background in graphic design, is to hire a professional cover designer in your specific genre.	<p>You will need to decide what size you want your book (which you will also need to complete formatting). You will need a final page count for the spine width.</p> <p>You will also need to have a prepared blurb (back cover book description), Title, Subtitle (if necessary), Tagline (if desired), and an alternate dust-jacket back with author information for inner flap.</p>	2-3 months

Upload to POD	Print on Demand is a service that allows you to print a book when someone buys it.	<p><u>Amazon</u>, <u>IngramSpark</u>, <u>Draft2Digital</u>, <u>Barnes and Nobles Press</u>, all have versions of this service. Consider each, and possibly choose multiple as they have different distribution networks.</p> <p>Prepare meta-data (age category, genres, etc.) for uploading to POD. <u>Publisher Rocket</u> can help you create this meta-data.</p> <p>Some PODs allow you to set up Pre-Orders. If they do, you can set your book up completely, if not you will need to wait roughly 2 days before your desired publishing date to publish your book (it can take a while for the publishing to go through).</p>	
Proof Copies	Order proof copies of your book. This will assure that everything looks like it's supposed it.		1-2 weeks

	Proofreader	Comb through the proof copy, or hire fresh eyes to, to assure that the formatting is in order, no typos were missed in copy editing, and nothing is missing in the final copy. Let's face it, typos are inevitable, the more eyes combing the document, the better!		1 month
Marketing:				
	Announce Publication Date	With everything in order, it is time to announce the publication date!		
	Cover Reveal	Because it's beautiful and the world needs to see.		
	Advanced Reader Campaign	Contact book reviewers to pitch your book and offer a free Advanced Reader Copy (ARC) of either the physical or digital copy to read and review.	There are also services that connect readers with ARCs that would appeal to them, NetGalley is a popular one, though BookSirens may be a more affordable alternative. Consider offering your ARC readers exclusive content as a thank-you for their time.	3 months in advance

Book Launch Campaign	Create and prepare content to help hype up your book publication.	Can include: social media posts, blog posts, guest posts, interviews, blog tours, giveaways, and anything else you would be interested in to help gain interest in your upcoming book.	3 months in advance
Pre-Order Campaign	Incentives for your audience to pre-order your book. Pre-orders help boost your book on the day of release with immediate sales (particularly helpful on sites like Amazon).	Can include physical or digital swag (additional scenes, stickers, bookplates, character art, behind-the-scenes information, etc.)	1 month in advance
Publish	Yeah. It's happening.	For Amazon, click the "publish" button ~2 days prior to the actual publication date. If you are using Amazon and IngramSpark together, this is not a concern because Ingram will be enabled until Amazon takes over.	
Release Party	Because you should celebrate!	Consider hosting a physical party, a live-stream, or any other form of celebrating that would excite you.	
Post-Release			
Post-Release	Continue to market your book through regular content on social media, in-person book events, and guest appearances on blogs/podcasts/etc.		